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New York, 27 June-29 July 1994
Agenda item 7

REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS

Addendum

Programme budget implications of draft resolution V contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the Secretary-General

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council

1. At the twenty-ninth session of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the 20th meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning, the Conference of Ministers approved on 4 May 1994 its draft resolution V (resolution 789 (XXIX)), entitled "Strengthening information systems for Africa's recovery and sustainable development", for action by the Economic and Social Council.

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

2. Under the terms of the resolution, the Conference of Ministers:

(a) Requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to allocate additional resources to the subprogramme of the Commission on statistical and information systems development (para. 8);

(b) Also requests the Executive Secretary to seek additional resources through voluntary contributions for the Commission's subregional development information centres in the framework of the subprogramme on statistical and information systems development (para. 9);

(c) Requests the General Assembly, within the spirit of its decision 48/453 and in view of the importance of information systems for the development of Africa, to authorize the creation of three Professional posts at the P-3, P-4 and P-5 levels and four local-level posts to permit the delivery of the activities in the ECA subprogramme on statistical and information systems development, beginning with the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 (para. 10).

3. It will be recalled that in 1993, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1993/67, requested the General Assembly to ensure the provision of adequate staffing and resources to permit the implementation of activities under the subprogramme of the Commission on information systems development, beginning with the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. By decision 48/453, the Assembly endorsed the Council's resolution. In the statement on the programme budget implications of that decision, it was stated that the overall level of resources for ECA proposed under sections 15 and 20 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 would be adequate to carry out the activities programmed for that biennium; that it was also expected that the internal organizational restructuring of ECA would lead to further strengthening of the subprogramme on statistical and information systems development; and that a review of future arrangements for the Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS) would be undertaken in the course of 1994 and submitted to the ECA Conference of Ministers for its consideration.

4. The proposed review was undertaken by the Joint Conference of Planners, Statisticians and Demographers in March 1994, on the basis of a report on ECA's development information activities over a five-year period. The Joint Conference is a subsidiary organ of the Conference of Ministers. Its terms of reference include reviewing and monitoring the Commission's work programmes in information systems, and providing policy guidance and advice to the ECA Executive Secretary on the formulation of the biennial work programmes in this area. The Joint Conference commended the work that had been done by ECA (namely, PADIS) in the area of information development systems and expressed the view that it regarded the mandated activities as being of high importance to the region. It urged that appropriate staffing and other resources be allocated to the subprogramme on statistical information systems development to permit the delivery of planned and approved PADIS activities to member States on a regular basis.

5. The report of the Joint Conference was submitted to the Conference of Ministers which subsequently adopted its resolution 789 (XXIX).

6. PADIS was first established as an extrabudgetary project to be funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP grant covered salaries of both professional and support staff, and costs of operational activities. In 1992, however, UNDP funding of the project was discontinued. Since then, the financial situation of PADIS has been precarious despite efforts by ECA to find other sources of funding. This situation has been described most recently, in the report on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) at its thirty-first session on the evaluation of the development issues and

policies programme: ECA (E/AC.51/1994/5), which was considered by CPC during the first part of its thirty-fourth session (A/49/16 (Part I)).

B. Relationship of the requests to the programme of work

6. The request by the Conference of Ministers of ECA to establish three Professional and four local-level posts relates to programme 30 (Regional cooperation for development in Africa), subprogramme 6 (statistical and information systems development), of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. 1/ It also relates to the same subprogramme under section 15A (Economic Commission for Africa) of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

C. Additional requirements by which the requests would be implemented

7. Should the Economic and Social Council endorse the above-mentioned draft resolution V of the Conference of Ministers of ECA, the General Assembly would be requested to authorize the establishment as of January 1995 of three Professional and four local-level posts in ECA, under the subprogramme statistical and information systems development, for the undertaking of activities related to PADIS. These posts may be characterized as follows:

(a) Chief, Information systems development section (P-5). The incumbent will be responsible for overall management and delivery of the subprogramme activities in information systems development, including supervision of operational projects in this area;

(b) Information officer (P-4). The incumbent will be responsible for the coordination of information network activities. These activities involve coordination of information exchange, and standardization and harmonization of information systems with some 89 institutions in member States, and include the provision of advisory services and the organization of training;

(c) Information systems officer (P-3). The incumbent will be responsible for the maintenance and development of ECA's in-house development information databases as well as for supervision of operational projects in electronic communication and database development;

(d) Four local-level posts, of which three research assistants for substantive support, to collect, index and abstract materials for the in-house databases and respond to service information requests from member States and the general public, and one administrative assistant for administrative support.

8. The estimated costs of these posts for the remaining part of the biennium would be as follows:

	$
1 P-5	90 200
1 P-4	80 400
1 P-3	66 900
4 local level	36 800
Total	274 300

D. Potential for absorption

9. No provision has been made in the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 under section 15 (Economic Commission for Africa) to cover the estimated additional requirements of $274,300 related to the creation of these posts. At this stage, it is not anticipated that this amount could be absorbed within the provision appropriated under section 15 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

E. Contingency fund

10. Under the procedure established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213, annex I, section C, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. Under the same procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed resources available within the contingency fund, the activities concerned can be implemented only through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modifications of existing activities. Otherwise such additional activities will have to be deferred.

11. No activity has been identified for termination, deferral, curtailment or modification under section 15 for the biennium 1994-1995 in order to accommodate the requirements referred to above. Should it not prove possible to meet these requirements from the contingency fund, the establishment of the posts will have to be deferred, as provided for in the guidelines for use of the contingency fund, as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/211 of 21 December 1987, annex.

Notes

1/ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/47/6/Rev.1), vol. II, paras. 30.88-30.94.

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REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS

Addendum

Programme budget implications of draft resolution II, contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the Secretary-General

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council

1. At its seventeenth session held from 29 to 31 May 1994, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) adopted its draft resolution II (resolution 197 (XVII)), entitled "Permanent headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia". During its consideration of the resolution, the Commission had before it a report of the Executive-Secretary of the Commission 1/ on the subject.

2. Under the terms of the resolution, the Economic and Social Council would:

(a) Decide, having considered and subsequently accepted the offer of the Government of Lebanon, to recommend that the permanent headquarters of the Commission be relocated to Beirut (operative para. 4);

(b) Request the Secretary-General:

(i) To approach the Government of Lebanon, as soon as the appropriate legal action has been taken by the United Nations with regard to operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, in order to arrive at a common understanding on all issues and commitments relating to the relocation of the permanent headquarters of the Commission, to conclude an agreement concerning the headquarters and to agree upon a

suitable timetable and the necessary arrangements for the relocation of the permanent headquarters to Beirut in such a way as to ensure that the requirements for the proper functioning of the Commission are met;

(ii) To take all steps necessary to effect the transfer of the permanent headquarters of the Commission in accordance with the resolution (operative para. 5).

3. Should the Economic and Social Council adopt the resolution of ESCWA in which the Council would decide to recommend that the permanent headquarters of ESCWA be relocated to Beirut, consultations and negotiations will be undertaken with the Government of Lebanon on all issues relating to the relocation of the Commission's permanent headquarters, including the agreement concerning the headquarters and the timetable for the move to Beirut.

4. At the time that it was considering the question of its permanent headquarters, the Commission was provided with an indication of the costs involved in relocating those headquarters to Beirut. It was estimated that the costs of moving from Amman to Beirut would amount to $4.5 million and that annual staff costs would be approximately $1 million higher in Beirut. These costs are preliminary and would need to be refined on the basis of the outcome of the discussions with the Government of Lebanon.

5. Should the Economic and Social Council adopt the above-mentioned resolution, in which the Council would decide to recommend that the permanent headquarters of ESCWA be relocated to Beirut, the Secretary-General will, following consultations with the Government of Lebanon, revert to this question within the framework of existing budgetary procedures.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 19 (E/1994/39), annex IV.